

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration of the rejections contained in the Office Action of May 6, 2004 is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action of May 6, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 22-28, 31, 50-51 as being clearly anticipated by Okumura et al. Claims 12-14, 16-17 and 19 were rejected as being unpatentable over Okumura et al., further. Claims 20, 29, 32-38 and 40-41 were rejected as being unpatentable over Okumura et al. in view of Karlsrud et al. Claims 21, 30 and 42, further, were rejected as being unpatentable over Okumura et al. in view of Dexter et al. Claim 39 was rejected as being unpatentable over these two further references and also in view of Karlsrud et al.

However, the Examiner went on to indicate that claims 1-11 and 18 were allowed, and that claims 15 and 43-46 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The Examiner is thanked for the indication of allowable subject matter. By the above amendments, the subject matter of claim 15 has been incorporated into claim 12, and thus claims 12-14 and 16 should now be in condition for allowance. Similarly, the subject matter of claim 18 has been incorporated into claim 17, and thus claims 17 and 19-20 should be in condition for allowance.

Claims 21-42 have been canceled (along with claims 15 and 18), and thus these rejections have been rendered moot. No acquiescence to the positions taken by the Examiner should be assumed, however. Each of claims 43-46 has been rewritten into independent form, and thus these claims are also now in condition for allowance.

Claims 50 and 51 have been amended above to more clearly distinguish over Okumura et al.

In the Office Action, the Examiner took the position that both claims 50 and 51 were anticipated by Okumura et al. However, by the above amendments, claim 50 has been amended to return to its original form, reciting in pertinent part "a cleaning unit for scrubbing both sides of a polished workpiece." In the present invention, as reflected by claim 50, both sides of a polished wafer are scrubbed. Because both sides of the polished workpiece are scrubbed between primary polishing and secondary polishing, as reflected by claim 50, slurry or abrasive particles can be removed from both the front face and a rear face of the polished workpiece. Accordingly, it is possible to prevent cross-contamination between the primary polishing and the secondary polishing so as to avoid adverse

influences on the secondary polishing from the primary polishing. Accordingly, different processes can be performed in the respective polishing units without such cross-contamination.

Turning to Okumura et al., as the Examiner notes, Okumura et al. discloses a polishing unit 13 for polishing a semiconductor wafer, a washing unit 15 for washing the polished wafer and a polishing unit 14 for polishing the polished and washed wafer. As discussed in column 8, lines 56-59 of Okumura et al., "the semiconductor wafer can be polished by the polishing unit 13, washed by the washing unit 15, and then polished by the polishing unit 14." However, there is no discussion of scrubbing. More specifically, there is no discussion of scrubbing both sides of the polished wafer using washing unit 15. As the Examiner notes, a primary washing station 15-7 is employed by Okumura et al. However, as noted in column 5, lines 45-54, the primary washing process is carried out using a cleaning solvent such as pure water. Further, a secondary washing of the secondary washing station 15-9 is carried out using a cleaning solvent such as pure water as well. There is no disclosure or suggestion of scrubbing.

Accordingly, there is no disclosure or suggestion of the advantages of the present invention as described above. More specifically, there is no disclosure or suggestion of preventing cross-contamination between the primary polishing and the secondary polishing to avoid the adverse influence on the secondary polishing from the primary polishing by scrubbing both sides of the polished wafer.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 50, along with dependent claim 51, clearly patentably distinguishes over Okumura et al. Indication of such is respectfully requested.

In view of the above it is submitted that all of the claims now pending in the present application are in condition for allowance. Indication of such is respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is requested to pass the case to issue. If the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

Tetsuji TOGAWA et al.

By: 

Nils E. Pedersen
Registration No. 33,145
Attorney for Applicants

NEP/krp
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
November 8, 2004